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## **Newsletter - 1987-07-30**

E. De la Garza

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# NEWSLETTER

100-1115

30 July 1987

Washington DC

U.S. HOUSE APPROVES CATASTROPHIC ILLNESS PROGRAM. What is the very worst possible thing that could happen to a couple enjoying their lives after working hard to reach their goal of retirement? An accident or illness of catastrophic proportions which threatens to wipe out life savings and alter forever their plans for the golden years. We in the Congress have taken action to help.

Last week the House of Representatives approved a legislative measure that had been long-awaited by many Americans concerned with the rising cost of health care associated with catastrophic illnesses and accidents. Our bill is not perfect--but it addresses the major points of emphasis in helping people cope with enormous medical bills from unexpected and lengthy hospital stays.

The bill now goes over to the Senate for its consideration. The measure expands current Medicare benefits by placing a cap on the amount beneficiaries have to pay for Medicare-covered catastrophic services. Expanded coverage includes hospital care, physician services, skilled nursing home care--and the bill would create a limited prescription drug benefit and a respite care benefit. In addition, the House-approved bill allows for states to pay the Medicare premiums, deductibles and coinsurance for Medicare enrollees with incomes below the federal poverty line.

These expansions in coverage would be paid by the beneficiaries through an increase in the Part B premium and through a new income-related supplemental premium to be paid by all Medicare beneficiaries who have federal tax liability (this supplemental premium would be determined from a table in the federal income tax instruction booklet).

Those individuals who are currently retired and receiving Medicare benefits will be required to pay the increased premiums for catastrophic coverage. Under the bill, all other individuals (those beyond 65 years of age, but still working) can choose between the Medicare catastrophic coverage or whatever private health insurance programs in which they may be enrolled.

# # #

VALLEY VIEW SCHOOL BREAKING NEW GROUND. Your Congressman had the pleasure of participating in the latest expansion of the Valley View Independent School District. At Noontime on July 25th, we attended a groundbreaking ceremony to inaugurate new facilities for the Valley View School.

The Superintendent, Leónel Galaviz, the Principal, Esteban Delatorre, and Assistant Principal, George Ramirez, at Valley View ISD were very kind to invite me--and my longstanding interest in education for our area truly made the ceremony a special event. When schools expand, your Congressman is happy for the youngsters who will benefit.

As a gift to the Valley View School, your Congressman gave the School an oak tree to plant on the campus grounds as my offering to a fine school!

We hope the "Kika de la Garza Oak" grows along with the fortunes of the good students who attend Valley View, and that both will have deep roots and futures that soar sky-high!

# # #

PAN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY HONORED IN WASHINGTON. The nationally prestigious Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) will make a special award to Pan American University of Edinburg--and the awards presentation will take place in our Congressional office here in the Capital!

The CASE organization, based in Washington, will honor Pan American for its support and commitment to excellence in higher education. This award takes notice of Pan American's recently initiated "Campaign for Pan American" (a fundraising campaign to expand the University's academic reach), as well as citing Pan American's overall efforts to provide quality academic instruction and physical plant facilities. The importance of such national recognition by CASE just simply cannot be overstated.

The Executive Director of Pan American's Alumni Association asked me if the awards presentation could take place in Washington, and of course I agreed and offered our Congressional office as a setting. The President of CASE, Dr Gary Quehl, will make the official award presentation on July 30th. We plan to video tape the ceremony for use by the University at a later date.

Your Congressman is serving as General Chairman of the Campaign for Pan American University--and there is no better way to begin the University's long term fundraising effort than to have the accolades of an organization of the rank and prestige of CASE. To Dr Quehl and CASE, we say thank you indeed; and to Pan American University, we say it is just the beginning of a road that will lead to supremacy and nationally renowned excellence.

# # #

SOUTH TEXAS STUDENTS VISIT CAPITOL. Miss Cindy Castillo of McAllen paid a visit to our Congressional office last week in connection with her tour of the nation's Capital--sponsored by the National Youth Leadership Council. The best and the brightest are chosen to spend time in the nation's Capital meeting with Congressional and Administration officials. It was a pleasure to spend some time with Cindy, and we wish her well.

Also, five young ladies from South Texas came to our office as part of a national tour of the Capital sponsored by the Future Homemakers of America. They were: Amanda Lopez of Lytle, Roxie Hillje of Cotulla, Lisa Stevens of Jourdanton, Briana Buscher of Blanco, and Carol Summy of Johnson City.

The FHA sponsored an ice cream event for the visiting members--and it followed a big hot dog affair put on by the American Meat Institute in the U.S. Capitol. We know all the youngsters had fun--but your Congressman didn't have the chance to escort them over to these events due to our extensive debate in the House on the Catastrophic Medicare Coverage bill. We know they had fun--and we enjoyed our brief visit with all of them.

# # #

VISITORS FROM HOME. Dr and Mrs Mario Ramirez of Rio Grande City; Sarah Rodriguez, Miss Hermila Anzaldua, and Michael O'Connell--of McAllen; Mr and Mrs Camilo Reyna, Mr and Mrs Rudolfo Delgado, Maria G Hernandez--of Edinburg; Mr and Mrs James McCarthy of Rio Hondo; Mr Tom Carothers of Palestine; Mr Tom Champion of Brownsville; Judy and Tod St John of Weslaco

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